2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
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pounds sterling to Oxford University to found St. Antony College, and that was not the only assistance which he had given to the University, for other Colleges had also benefited from his generosity. I think probably the most outstanding things about Besse were his courage and his advanced ideas with regard to the employment of local labour. He was undaunted whatever scurvy trick fate chose to serve him, and at the same time his personal relations with his local labour were always excellent. He was not always very easy to deal with and seldom worried about what people said or thought of him—and enemies he certainly had, but what successful man has not. ooo

At the time of which I speak his principal business was in skins, hides, coffee, piece-goods and electrical goods, while at the same time he had innumerable shipping Agencies and a very important petrol Agency, to say nothing of his own line of coastal steamers which traded round the coast of Arabia down to Mauritius and up into the Mediterranean. I was very glad when His Majesty, King George VI, was graciously pleased to confer upon him an honorary knighthood of the British Empire for his outstanding achievements and his generosity, which had been of great benefit to the Colony. At the same time I was frankly disappointed that he had thought fit to give over a million pounds to the University of Oxford to found a new College, because there seemed to be a sufficiency of University Colleges in the United Kingdom, and what we needed so badly in Aden was a new Civil Hospital. I gave him my views and I told him that I thought he should have put the money back into the place through which he had made it, and that to have built a hospital and to have endowed it would have been a wonderful memorial which would have stood for ever. He took my criticism, my direct attack, very well, he always did, and immediately gave £50,000 to encourage technical education and the education of women in the Colony. The fine administrative block of the Technical Institute is a memorial to his generosity, and the Besse centre in Crater where women, who have not had the advantage of a school education, can learn many things, is another of his benefactions. {873} {562}

The head office messenger came hurriedly into my office:

Aden

000 I should not have been at all surprised to hear that my old friend Ash Shami had had a hand in the matter. We were not far from the Yemen border and the presence of the Governor of Aden in the Lower Yafa hills where only one of my predecessors had been before, and that nearly twenty-five years perviously, implying as it did a potential extension of our direct influence, must have been disturbing to that astute gentleman.

437 312 • 502 The path down the hill was still impassable for animals when we left Al Qara to return to Aden two days later, so we were obliged to leave by the other track on the other side of the hill which is used by the women to bring water from the wells in the valley far below.

643 793 778 534 789 We started the return journey in the early morning after bidding our host, the Sultan, farewell and thanking him for his kindness to us during the visit. We left him there alone, the descendant of the old priest kings of pagan pre-Islamic times, surrounded by his wild tribesmen who in times of trouble venerate him as they would a God, for is he not the custodian of the drum of the Yafais which is kept in some secret chamber in Al Qara only to be sounded when the Yafa nation is in sore distress, and has he not the magical gift of rain-making in times of drought, like his ancestors before him. These things they believe, but when the rainfall is sufficient and the Yafa people are free from want or oppression then they treat him with scant ceremony, which is the fate of all gods, ancient or modern, in the East or in the West.

000 The return journey, being downhill all the way, was much easier and quicker and we had to spend only one night in the open. On the second and last day of the return journey something went wrong with the lunch-time arrangements and I, mounted once again on the Sultan's donkey, rode past the rendezvous and did not realise that I had done so until I had travelled some distance. Loath to retrace my steps, I decided to forgo lunch and to push on to the Government Guard Post below which, on the way up, we had left our motor transport. I rode alone for most of the way, except for the Jemadar and his bosom companion, an elderly Qadhi, who had travelled up